

Message Text

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45

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 SAM-01 OMB-01 /066 W

----- 070192

R 061341Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2309

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 0045

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, LE, SY

SUBJECT: LEBANESE-SYRIAN CONSULTATIONS

REF: TEL AVIV 0057

1. REFTEL SOUGHT COMMENTS OF EMBASSIES BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS ON POSSIBLE BEARING OF KHADDAM-FRANGIEH MEETING AND JANUARY 7 FRANGIEH-ASAD SUMMIT ON SITUATION ON ISRAEL'S NORTHERN BORDER.

2. HAVE NO HARD FACTS AT PRESENT. WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY DISCUSS FRANGIEH-ASAD MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF SYRIAN DELEGATION BY END OF WEEK WHEN WILL PROBE FOR INFORMATION ON SYRIAN OFFERS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND LEBANESE REACTION THERETO.

3. SYRIAN MEDIA OVER PAST FEW DAYS HAS FEATURED LEBANESE PRESS ACCOUNTS STRESSING IMPORTANCE OF UPCOMING SUMMIT: LEBANESE REPORTEDLY ECSTATIC AT THIS FIRST VISIT BY ASAD, (INDEED BY ANY SYRIAN PRESIDENT FOR MANY YEARS).
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LEBANESE ARE REPORTEDLY EXPRESSING PARTICULAR PLEASURE

THAT DEFENSE OF SOUTH LEBANON "HAS BECOME SOURCE
OF ANXIETY TO SYRIA." FORMER PRIMMIN SALAM IS QUOTED AS
SAYING ISRAELI AGGRESSION REQUIRES PREPARING A JOINT
SYRO-LEBANESE DEFENSE PLAN. MORE RESTRAINED SYRIAN PUBLIC
COMMENT TYPIFIED BY UNSIGNED EDITORIAL JANUARY 5 IN AL-BAATH THAT
SYRIA HAS "MORE THAN ONCE EXPRESSED ITS READINESS TO DEFEND
SOUTH LEBANON AS IF IT WERE PART OF SYRIA ITSELF."
ANOTHER AL-BAATH COLUMNIST SAME DAY CLAIMED THAT LONGSTANDING
BONDS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE HELPED SYRIA FOIL
ISRAELI ATTEMPT TO ANNEX PART OF SOUTH LEBANON.
SAME PAPER JAN 6 OBSERVES ASAD'S VISIT WILL NOT JUST CEMENT
EXISTING BONDS BUT ALSO ACHIEVE "COORDINATION" BETWEEN
THE TWO COUNTRIES SINCE ASAD WILL CONFIRM SYRIA'S ROLE
IN PROTECTING LEBANON AND MAINTAINING ITS INTEGRITY.
DAMASCUS MEDIA, HOWEVER, LEAVES TO SUCH AS BEIRUT'S AS-SAFIR TO
PRETEND HAVE ACCESS TO SUCH SPECIFICS AS "ASAD CARRIES WITH
HIM A PLAN FOR DEFENDING THE SOUTH...LEBANON PREFERS
ARMS TO FORCES SO AS TO AVOID AN OPEN WAR WITH ISRAEL."
MURPHY

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